



MEDIA CONTACTS:

Danielle Johnson, Wisconsin Department of Tourism
Phone: 608-266-0458
Email: djohnson@travelwisconsin.com

Lisa Marshall, Wisconsin Department of Tourism
Phone: 608-267-3773
Email: lmarshall@travelwisconsin.com

Press Room: <http://media.travelwisconsin.com>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AS THE TEMPERATURE DROPS, WISCONSIN'S WINTER WONDERLAND
EXPLODES WITH A FLURRY OF CAN'T-MISS EVENTS**
Wisconsin's Top Winter Events November through March

MADISON, Wis. (Nov. 14, 2011) – Wintertime in Wisconsin is all about having fun. In fact, it's where the great outdoors and the great indoors come together. So whether you like to ski, snowmobile, get a massage, visit an indoor waterpark or enjoy the performing arts, it's time to get out and enjoy great events in Wisconsin's winter wonderland.

And remember, travelers looking for year-round Wisconsin getaway ideas, travel planning, events and free guides can discover their own fun at TravelWisconsin.com. You can also choose to "Like" us at [Facebook.com/TravelWisconsin](https://www.facebook.com/TravelWisconsin) or follow along on Twitter at [Twitter.com/TravelWI](https://twitter.com/TravelWI). And don't forget to bring all the fun Wisconsin has to offer right to your fingertips by downloading the free Travel Wisconsin™ iPhone or Android apps.

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**WISCONSIN'S BEST
WINTER FESTIVALS, EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES
November 2011 - March 2012**

NOVEMBER EVENTS

House on the Rock Christmas Experience – Spring Green	Nov. 4, 2011-Jan. 1, 2012
A Cedarburg Christmas – Cedarburg	Nov. 11, 2011-Jan. 2012
Trainfest – West Allis	Nov. 12-13, 2011
Holiday Art Fair – Madison	Nov. 18-20, 2011
Holiday Folk Fair International – West Allis	Nov. 18-20, 2011
Christmas Tour of Homes and Craft Sale – Hudson	Nov. 18-20, 2011
Milwaukee Holiday Parade – Milwaukee	Nov. 19, 2011
Tinsel Trail Arts & Crafts Show – Stevens Point	Nov. 20, 2011
Appleton Downtown Christmas Parade – Appleton	Nov. 22, 2011
Holiday Art, Craft & Gift Expo – West Allis	Nov. 25-27, 2011
The Polar Express – Green Bay	Nov. 25-27, Dec. 1-4, 2011
Garden of Lights – Green Bay	Nov. 25-27, Dec. 2-4, 9-11, 16-18, 26-29, 2011
“Junie B. in Jingle Bells, Batman Smells” – Milwaukee	Nov. 25 – Dec. 24, 2011
Old World Wisconsin’s “Jacob Marley’s Christmas Carol” – Eagle	Nov. 25-Dec.18, 2011
Wollersheim Winery Vintage Christmas – Prairie Du Sac	Nov. 26, 2011

DECEMBER EVETS

MSO Holiday Pops Spectacular – Milwaukee	Dec. 2-4, 2011
Milwaukee Repertory Theater’s “A Christmas Carol” – Milwaukee	Dec. 2-24, 2011
Old World Christmas Market – Elkhart Lake	Dec. 2-11, 2011
Spring Green Country Christmas – Spring Green	Dec. 3, 2011
Fire and Ice & International Holiday Festival – Kenosha	Dec. 3-4, 2011
A Heritage Hill Christmas – Green Bay	Dec. 3, 10, 17, 2011
The Spirit of Christmas Past at Old World Wisconsin – Eagle	Dec. 3-4, 10-11, 2011
Christmas in the Air – Oshkosh	Dec. 6, 2011
Milwaukee Ballet’s “The Nutcracker” – Milwaukee	Dec. 10-26, 2011
Holiday Light Show – Janesville	Dec. 16-23, 26-31, 2011
Holiday Ice Show – Pleasant Prairie	Dec. 17, 2011
Milwaukee Winter Fest – Milwaukee	Dec. 21-31, 2011
Boulder Junction Winter Celebration – Boulder Junction	Dec. 29, 2011
Dropping of the Carp – Prairie du Chien	Dec. 31, 2011

JANUARY EVENTS

Polar Bear Swim – Sheboygan	Jan. 1, 2012
Bald Eagle Watching Days – Prairie du Sac	Jan. 13-14, 2012
Ragtime Festival – Eau Claire	Jan. 13-15, 2012
AMSOIL World Championship Snowmobile Derby – Eagle River	Jan. 13-22, 2012
Waukesha JanBoree – Waukesha	Jan. 20-22, 2012
IPC Nordic Skiing World Cup – Cable	Jan. 23-30, 2012

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Winterfest & National Snow Sculpting Championships – Lake Geneva	Feb. 1-5, 2012
Fish Creek Winter Festival – Fish Creek	Feb. 3-5, 2012
Hot Air Affair – Hudson	Feb. 3-5, 2012
Apostle Islands Sled Dog Race – Bayfield	Feb. 3-5, 2012
Otter Street Fisheree –Oshkosh	Feb. 4, 2012
Iola Winter Carnival – Iola	Feb. 4-5, 2012

Winter Festival – Cedarburg

Mid-Continent Railway Snow Train – North Freedom

Feb. 4-5, 2012

Feb. 10-12, 2012

Death by Chocolate – Appleton

Beloit International Film Festival – Beloit

Feb. 14, 2012

Feb. 16-19, 2012

Madison Winter Festival/Capitol Square Sprints – Madison

Mad City Model Railroad Show – Madison

Feb. 18-19, 2012

Feb. 18-19, 2012

Book Across the Bay Cross-Country Ski Race – Ashland

Milwaukee RV & Camping Trailer Show – West Allis

Feb. 18, 2012

Feb. 23-26, 2012

Madison Fishing Expo – Madison

Bald Eagle Appreciation Day – Prairie du Chien

Feb. 24-26, 2012

Feb. 25, 2012

Midwinter Art Faire– Berlin

Feb. 25, 2012

MARCH EVENTS

Bayfield Winter Festival – Bayfield

Overture's International Festival – Madison

March 2-4, 2012

March 3, 2012

Klondike Days – Eagle River

Wollersheim Winery Open House – Prairie du Sac

March 3-4, 2012

March 3-4, 2012

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Sports Show – West Allis

Canoecopia – Madison

March 7-11, 2012

March 9-11, 2012

St. Patrick's Day Parade – Milwaukee

Arti Gras – Green Bay

March 10, 2012

March 10-11, 2012

Green Bay Film Festival – Green Bay

Maple Syrup Magic Open House – Newberg

March 23-25, 2012

March 24, 2012

Avalanche Days – Wausau

Eau Claire Jazz Festival – Eau Claire

March 26- April 8, 2012

March 29- April 1, 2012

WINTER EVENT DESCRIPTIONS

NOVEMBER

House on the Rock Christmas Experience – Spring Green

Nov. 4, 2011-Jan. 1, 2012

Enjoy the Rock with a holiday twist featuring a chance to tour the architectural wonder adorned with Christmas decor. Stroll through the buildings, which are open daily, and see a collection of more than 6,000 snowman figures, hear the sounds of holiday music and see the famous spaces like the Infinity Room and the Carousel beautifully lit with decorations. 608-935-3639; www.thehouseontherock.com

A Cedarburg Christmas – Cedarburg

Nov. 11, 2011-Jan. 2012

This year in the historic town of Cedarburg, Christmas takes on a whole new meaning with, "A Cedarburg Christmas, Everyone's Home for the Holidays." Watch as the town is transformed into a winter wonderland, complete with decked out buildings and dozens of holiday events. The season kicks off with a downtown holiday window unveiling on Nov. 11. Other events include the Festive Friday Eves, "Miracle on 34th Street" at Rivoli Theater, Christmas in the Country Arts & Crafts Fair, sleigh rides, the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts & Fiber Arts Exhibit and much more. You don't want to miss this unique Christmas experience. 800-237-2874; www.cedarburgchristmas.com



*Kuhfuss House Museum,
photo courtesy Cedarburg Chamber of Commerce*

Trainfest – West Allis

Nov. 12-13, 2011

Model train enthusiasts from all over the world will unite for the year's 40th anniversary of Trainfest. Held at the Wisconsin Exposition Center at State Fair Park, over 50 operating model railroad displays with elaborate scenic reproductions will be featured. Enjoy the exhibits from 40 manufacturers and 10 railroad historic societies and museums in 200,000 square feet of display area - that's over three football fields of model trains.

262-820-3566; www.trainfest.com

Holiday Art Fair – Madison

Nov. 18-20, 2011

Get in the gift-giving spirit at Madison's annual Holiday Art Fair. An excellent showcase of contemporary fine art and crafts, the show will feature more than 90 artists. Peruse the beautiful handmade ceramics, fiber art, glass, jewelry, prints, photographs and more. With extended shopping hours, ginger bread decorating contests and even entertainment, this year's fair is sure to be a cool experience.

608-257-0158; www.mmoca.org

Holiday Folk Fair International – West Allis

Nov. 18-20, 2011

If you're looking for unique culture, regional cuisine and lively music and dance, look no further than the Holiday Folk Fair International. Known as America's Premier Cultural Festival, fairgoers can purchase beautifully handcrafted goods and enjoy entertainment from around the world, right in Wisconsin.

800-324-7468; www.folkfair.org

Christmas Tour of Homes and Craft Sale – Hudson

Nov. 18-20, 2011

Tour five of Hudson's finest homes decked out for the holidays including the historic Octagon House. This year features new tour options. Take the Friday night Evening Dazzle Tour where you'll visit each of the five amazing homes while enjoying live music at the Octagon House. The black tie event follows the Evening Dazzle Tour and provides a night of fun. Enjoy a reception at *Urban Olive & Vine* restaurant with appetizers, desserts and live music. On Saturday and Sunday, you can also take a traditional tour of the homes and enjoy the craft fair at the Hudson House Inn/Best Western.

715-386-8411; www.hudsonwi.org

Milwaukee Holiday Parade – Milwaukee

Nov. 19, 2011

Celebrate the holidays in downtown Milwaukee. Now in its 85th year, the Milwaukee Holiday Parade will feature more than 100 units, award-winning bands, live animal entourages and a live nativity plus local TV and radio personalities. The parade marches down Kilbourn Ave. from Astor St. and makes its way to the Grand Ave. Mall downtown.

Tinsel Trail Arts & Crafts Show – Stevens Point

Nov. 20, 2011

With more than 130 high quality exhibitors at the Tinsel Trail Arts & Crafts Show, fairgoers are sure to find gifts for everyone this holiday season. Sponsored by the Stevens Point Jr. Women's Club, there will also be a bake sale, food and refreshments.

www.stevenspointjwc.org/

Appleton Downtown Christmas Parade – Appleton

Nov. 22, 2011

Light up your holiday season at Wisconsin's largest night time Christmas parade. Experience this year's "Lighting in the Season" theme with 70 floats and 18 bands and marching units. Participate in the Santa Scamper one-mile run and see the guest of honor himself, Santa Claus.

920-954-9112; www.appletondowntown.org

Holiday Art, Craft & Gift Expo – West Allis

Nov. 25-27, 2011

This art and craft expo is the Midwest's largest indoor gift show. With craft demonstrations, live entertainment, wine tasting and a visit from Santa this event is a great way to get in the holiday spirit. The expo is held at the State Fair Park Expo Center. 262-506-4114; www.craftfairwisconsin.com

The Polar Express – Green Bay

Nov. 25-27, Dec. 1-4, 2011

All aboard! The Polar Express heads north for an unforgettable holiday experience. As you sip rich hot chocolate and make your way to the North Pole, enjoy a dramatic reading of the classic story. While on the train ride, there will also be activities for the whole family to enjoy. So special an event, Santa himself joins in on the fun. Reservations are required. 920-437-7623; www.nationalrrmuseum.org

Garden of Lights – Green Bay

Nov. 25-27, Dec. 2-4, 9-11, 16-18, 26-29, 2011



Illuminate your holiday season at this breathtaking event. Take a stroll or horse-drawn wagon ride and witness over 250,000 LED lights take on shapes of flowers, butterflies, and other artistic forms. New this year is the weather walk, a colorful journey through a simulated rainstorm, seven-foot-tall sunset and ending with a beautiful rainbow. Afterwards enjoy a cookie and warm up with some hot chocolate while listening to live entertainment. 877-355-4224; www.gbbg.org

*Caterpillar Lights at Garden of Lights
photo courtesy CaylorPhoto.com and the Green Bay Botanical Garden*

First Stage Children's Theater's

Nov. 25-Dec. 24, 2011

"Junie B. in Jingle Bells, Batman Smells" – Milwaukee

Based on the book series by Barbara Park, it's Christmas season in Room One and first-grader Junie B. Jones is a mix of emotions. As she dreams about goodies from the school's holiday gift shop, she's also upset that the name she drew for the Secret Santa gift exchange is none other than Tattletale Mary. Watch as Junie B. copes with the challenges of school and learns the true meaning of the season.

414-267-2961; www.firststage.org

Old World Wisconsin's "Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol" – Eagle

Nov. 25-Dec. 18, 2011

Enjoy dinner and a show at Old World Wisconsin's winter dinner theater production of "Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol" by Tom Mula. A twist on the beloved tale, enjoy the performance at Old World Wisconsin's nearly 150-year-old Caldwell Farmers' Hall with a delicious holiday dinner of turkey, stuffing, mince pies and more. Performances on weekends and reservations are required.

262-594-6301; www.oldworldwisconsin.org

Wollersheim Winery A Vintage Christmas – Prairie Du Sac

Nov. 26, 2011

With Christmas carolers to set the mood, picturesque winery views and old world charm, A Vintage Christmas is the perfect event to get you in the holiday spirit. Taste Wollersheim wines, festive foods by Blue Spoon in Prairie Du Sac and learn some great holiday entertaining tips. And while you're there, bring your camera and take your family Christmas card photo. The views are phenomenal.

1-800-VIP-WINE (847-9463); www.wollersheim.com

DECEMBER

Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra's "Holiday Pops Spectacular" – Milwaukee

Dec. 2-4, 2011

Celebrate the season with carols, sing-alongs, and the Milwaukee Symphony Pops – Milwaukee's favorite holiday musical tradition. Held at Uihlein Hall at the Marcus Center for Performing Arts, the Pop's Spectacular is conducted by Jeff Tyzik and directed by members from the Milwaukee Children's Choir, MSO Chorus, and Concordia University.

800-291-7605; <http://www.mso.org>

Milwaukee Repertory Theater's "A Christmas Carol" – Milwaukee

Dec. 2-24, 2011

Wisconsin's favorite holiday tradition returns for its 36th year at the historic Pabst Theater in downtown Milwaukee. Filled with beautiful carols, this timeless Dickens classic touches the soul and brightens the holiday season.

414-224-9490; <http://www.milwaukeeerep.com>

Old World Christmas Market – Elkhart Lake

Dec. 2-11, 2011

The Old World Christmas Market, reminiscent of the centuries-old Christkindlesmarkt in Nuremberg, Germany, is a traditional old world experience not offered anywhere else. Shop from dozens of vendors for authentic gifts and toys. Smell the scents of roasted almonds and bratwurst and learn about German, Czech and Russian heritage.

800-876-3399; www.christmasmarketatosthoff.com

Spring Green Country Christmas – Spring Green

Dec. 3, 2011

Horse drawn carriage rides set the mood at this annual holiday festival, as well as a holiday craft fair, quilt show and breakfast with Santa. The event is topped off with a spectacular fireworks display. Visitors can also take the annual Country Christmas tour of homes where neighbors open their doors and showcase their holiday decor.

800-588-2042; <http://www.springgreen.com>

Fire and Ice & International Holiday Festival – Kenosha

Dec. 3-4, 2011

Help celebrate a great 75 years of Kenosha's Public Museum at Fire and Ice. Enjoy the International Holiday Festival by sampling ethnic foods and arts and crafts from all around the world. Children will enjoy making ornaments and watching live entertainment. The party continues with ice sculptures, jazz music, a visit from Santa and the community Christmas tree lighting.

262-653-4140; www.kenoshapublicmuseum.org

A Heritage Hill Christmas – Green Bay

Dec. 3, 10, 17, 2011

Travel back in time this Christmas with a stroll through Heritage Hill. Take a horse drawn wagon through this historic park, see the old buildings lit up and let the sounds of the season captivate you. Relive holiday traditions with historic dancing, toy making and holiday baking on the farm. Enjoy Christmas carolers while sipping hot chocolate with friends and family.

920-448-5150; www.heritagehillgb.org

The Spirit of Christmas Past at Old World Wisconsin – Eagle

Dec. 3-4, 10-11, 2011

As you're transformed to 1870s Wisconsin, you'll enjoy the charm of centuries old traditions. Walk house-to-house, shop-to-shop at Crossroads Village and Ketola farm while you enjoy treats and festivities of the past. On Saturday, Dec. 3 Old World Wisconsin's historical gardener, Marcia Carmichael, will host a book signing for her recently released book featuring the gardens of Old World Wisconsin.

262-594-6300; www.oldworldwisconsin.org

Christmas in the Air – Oshkosh

Dec. 6, 2011

This annual Christmas event sponsored by the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) is a great way to celebrate the holidays and satisfy your sweet tooth. Enjoy chocolate from vendors in the area as well as performances by local dance groups. And don't miss Santa, as he drops in not by sleigh, but by helicopter.

920-426-4818; <http://www.pleasantprairieonline.com>

Milwaukee Ballet's "The Nutcracker" – Milwaukee

Dec. 11-26, 2011

Michael Pink's production of The Nutcracker is Milwaukee's biggest holiday spectacle and promises to delight and dazzle audience members, creating lasting holiday memories. Watch as dolls, toys and snowflakes come to life under the direction of Tchaikovsky's unforgettable score, performed live by the Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra and Milwaukee Children's Choir. Dancers from the Nancy Einhorn Milwaukee Ballet II Program and Milwaukee Ballet School add to the story's youthful exuberance.

414-902-2103; www.milwaukeeballet.org

Holiday Light Show – Janesville

Dec. 16-23, 26-31, 2011

Light up your holiday spirit with a walk through the botanical garden lit up by 300,000 lights throughout nearly 100 displays. Show your creativity by entering in the gingerbread house decorating contest. After the decorating, the houses will be placed around a large-scale model train that weaves in and out of different landscapes. Enjoy live entertainment and internationally-themed activities. There have been visits from Santa and his reindeer on occasion.

608-752-3885 ext. 19; <http://www.rotarybotanicalgardens.org>

Holiday Ice Show – Pleasant Prairie

Dec. 17, 2011

What's winter without sliding on some ice? Watch a more graceful version at the Pleasant Prairie Holiday Ice Show. Come enjoy the magic of winter by seeing professional figure skaters put on synchronized and freestyle performances. Listen to Christmas music as the figure skaters dance around decorated trees and sip on some hot chocolate as Santa drives the Zamboni in and hits the ice for open skate. This is definitely a special holiday moment for the whole family.

262-925-6754; <http://www.pleasantprairieonline.com>

Milwaukee Winter Fest – Milwaukee

Dec. 21-31, 2011

After more than a decade long hiatus, Winter Fest returns to Milwaukee in snowstorm fashion. The Frontier Airlines Center will be transformed into a 12-day-long winter wonderland filled with activities, rides, movies, ice-skating and plenty of photo opportunities. The event kicks off with "Read It to Beat It" an attempt to shatter a Guinness World Record of students reading out loud in one sitting. There will be a Radio Disney family fun day for the kids, and a dance party at Night Storm, a teenage dance club. Don't miss the life-sized snow globe, fast pitch snowball throwing contest and celebrity guests including Ryan Grant and Craig Counsell. Start a new family tradition, or rekindle one from years ago at Winter Fest.

414-376-6514; www.milwaukeewinterfest.com

Boulder Junction Winter Celebration – Boulder Junction **Dec. 29, 2011**

Celebrate the end of the year at the fifth annual Boulder Junction Winter Celebration. This year's festivities include a chili dump, bonfire, music and fireworks. Whether you are into ice skating and sledding or just relaxing with a cup of hot chocolate, this event is sure to be a great way to kick off your New Year's weekend.

715-385-2400; www.boulderjct.org

Dropping of the Carp – Prairie du Chien **Dec. 31, 2011**

At the stroke of midnight on Dec. 31, 2011, watch in awe as "Lucky #9," a 29-pound frozen carp, takes center stage during a 100-foot drop to usher in the New Year. Prior to the drop, "Lucky #9" is put on a throne where participants are encouraged to kiss the fish for good luck. And the "carp-tastic" fun doesn't end there. The event has spawned 'Carp Fest' which features a series of unique, fun-filled events throughout the city's parks and facilities.

608-326-8602; www.prairieduchien.org/visitors/events.htm

JANUARY

Polar Bear Swim – Sheboygan **Jan. 1, 2012**

Some call them fearless, others may say insane, but every new year's day, hundreds of Sheboygan residents charge into the frigid waters of Lake Michigan to celebrate the New Year. Afterwards, the swimmers warm up with music, entertainment, a brat fry and beer. Are you ready to get your feet wet?

920-467-8436

Bald Eagle Watching Days – Prairie du Sac **Jan. 13-14, 2012**

Watch as these majestic creatures soar around the open waters of the Wisconsin River. Take a guided bus tour, or wildlife photography seminar and enjoy birds of prey shows. There will also be conservation exhibits, and places to learn about Native American legends.

800-683-2453; www.ferrybluffeaglecouncil.org

Ragtime Festival – Eau Claire **Jan. 13-15, 2012**

Travel 100 years into the past at this year's Ragtime Festival. Vintage clothing from 1912 and silent films set the mood. Boogie the night away at one of the four concerts, join-in on sing-a-longs or be mesmerized by the old fashioned pianos.

715-834-2668; www.ecragtime.org

AMSOIL World Championship Snowmobile Derby – Eagle River **Jan. 13-22, 2012**

The AMSOIL World Championship Snowmobile Derby has been called the Indy 500 of snowmobiling, and is known as the largest snowmobile race in the world. Each year, the event attracts more than 25,000 spectators from all walks of life. The derby hosts three separate races: ice oval, snow-cross, and vintage racing. This year, heated indoor seating will be available for event-goers.

715-479-4424; www.derbytrack.com

Waukesha JanBoree – Waukesha **Jan. 20-22, 2012**

What does geocaching, Alaskan malamute dog pulls and toboggan sledding have in common? You can experience them all at this year's Waukesha JanBoree. With more than 30 events to partake in, you will have no problem fulfilling your weekend. There will be a penguin egg hunt, geocaching lessons with over 40 caches scattered about Waukesha, an ice sculpting demonstration and a 350-foot-long toboggan run, which happens to be the only toboggan run in Wisconsin.

262-524-3737; www.jamboree.org

IPC Nordic Skiing World Cup – Cable

Jan. 23-30, 2012

After having been overseas for the past seven years, the International Paralympic Committee Nordic Skiing World Cup is coming back to U.S. soil. The event features four cross-country and two biathlon races with more than 100 adaptive sports athletes from 15 countries expected to attend.

719-866-4529; <http://www.cxcskiing.org>

FEBRUARY

Winterfest & National Snow Sculpting Championships – Lake Geneva

Feb. 1-5, 2012

Let it snow! Let it snow! Let it snow! Approximately 150 tons of snow will be brought in to Lake Geneva this weekend for the National Snow Sculpting Championship. The event includes live music, children's activities, hot air balloon rides and sleigh rides.

262-248-4416; www.lakegenevawi.com

Snowflake Ski Jump Tournament – Westby

Feb. 2-4, 2012

Enjoy some old fashioned skiing at the annual Snowflake Ski Jump Tournament. Watch as U.S. and international competitors shoot down the 118-meter Olympic-sized ramp at top speeds hundreds of feet above the crowd. Approximately five international teams and dozens of U.S. teams compete and after the jumps, spectators and athletes can enjoy live entertainment and refreshments.

608-634-3211; www.snowflakeskiclub.com

Fish Creek Winter Festival – Fish Creek

Feb. 3-5, 2012

Human foosball. Need we say more? Aside from some crazy events like the costumed fruit-loop run, bed racing, toilet seat throw, bike toss event and snow shoe dance contest, the Fish Creek Winter Festival can be considered somewhat normal. Enjoy sleigh rides, trolley rides, ice sculptures, a chili cook-off and the Winter Festival Parade.

920-868-2316; www.visitfishcreek.com

Annual Hot Air Affair – Hudson

Feb. 3-5, 2012

The Hudson Hot Air Affair is the largest winter hot air balloon fest in the Midwest. Each year thousands of spectators come to enjoy the mass ascension of nearly 40 hot air balloons. Celebrate the affair with this year's dragon themed torchlight parade in downtown Hudson. At night see the glow of all the balloons as they fire up for all to enjoy. Join in on the fun with some smooch boarding, an event where teams of four hop on one set of skis and attempt to ski an obstacle course. There is also a marketplace and craft fair, pancake breakfast and other winter activities for the whole family.

715-386-8411; www.hudsonhotairaffair.com

Apostle Islands Sled Dog Race – Bayfield Feb. 3-5, 2012

Do you have a love for dogs, enjoy fresh winter air and have an iron will? Well come and cheer on the mushers at the annual Apostle Islands Sled Dog Races. Keep warm at one of three main spectating locations where bonfires and warming tents will be in place. Additional race activities include a "Meet the Mushers" dinner, a mushers mixer and awards ceremony. Shorter distance races are also available for families to enjoy.

715-779-3335; www.bayfield.org



*Apostle Island Sled Dog Race,
photo courtesy Phillip Olson*

Otter Street Fisheree – Oshkosh

Feb. 4, 2012

Bundle up and get out your fishing pole for this year's ice fishing tournament. Watch as brave fishermen battle the freezing temperatures and rugged conditions of Lake Winnebago for the annual tournament. While they're fishing, enjoy food, quad races, winter activities and raffle prizes.
920-231-7380

Iola Winter Carnival – Iola

Feb. 4-5, 2012

Celebrate Norwegian culture at this year's Iola Winter Carnival. Enjoy a Norwegian Lutefisk dinner, craft fair, ice sculpting and of course, ski jumping. You can't get more Scandinavian than this.
715-445-4005; www.ischamber.org

Winter Festival – Cedarburg

Feb. 4-5, 2012

Start the golf season early by teeing off with yellow tennis balls at this year's Ice-Burg Open golf tournament. Join in on the wacky events like the costumed bed race, barrel racing and the co-ed snowball tournament. Relax with a tractor pulled hay wagon ride down the road while enjoying the beautiful ice sculptures. Indulge in the tastes of the town with the pancake breakfast, chili contest and a signature glass of wine.
262-377-9620; www.cedarburgfestivals.org

Mid-Continent Railway Snow Train – North Freedom

Feb. 10-12, 2012

Experience Wisconsin like never before on the Mid-Continent Railway Snow Train. See the snow covered trees, travel by natural creeks and watch for deer as you make your way through the beautiful Baraboo Hills. Riders are kept toasty warm with the 100-year-old tradition of steam or coal fired stoves. This is a unique experience for any train rider, new or old. First class dining services are available.
608-522-4261; www.midcontinent.org

Death by Chocolate – Appleton

Feb. 14, 2012

Put down the card, throw out the flowers, and head to the Death by Chocolate event this Valentine's Day. Indulge your way down College Avenue sampling desserts created by the best chefs around. Restaurants and coffee shops throughout Appleton will be competing for your vote on best chocolate. Tickets are required and all proceeds go to helping fund downtown projects.
920-954-9112; www.appletondowntown.org

Beloit International Film Festival – Beloit

Feb. 16-19, 2012

The Beloit International Film Festival (BIFF) features a dozen venues around Beloit that will host films, premieres, lectures, social events, late night BIFF After Dark parties and other opportunities to meet independent filmmakers. The Canned Film competition will give local residents the opportunity to submit a video and get involved with the festival.
608-313-1200; www.beloitfilmfest.com

Madison Winter Festival/Capitol Square Sprints – Madison

Feb. 18-19, 2012

See Capitol Square transformed into a snowpalooza. Expect a plethora of snow filled activities including cross-country skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, ice sculpting, snow carving, sledding and tubing. If that isn't mind chilling enough, you can also partake in the Frosty 5K Run or the one-mile Dog Jog. Bundle up the family and your furry friend and enjoy the winter magic.
608-385-8864; www.winter-fest.com

Mad City Model Railroad Show – Madison

Feb. 18-19, 2012

With 90,000 square feet of model train layouts in Z, N, HO, S, O and G scales, classic toy trains, exhibits and videos, the Mad City Model Railroad Show has it all for model train enthusiasts. This year's 45th anniversary includes more than 300 tables of tools, railroad collectibles, models, books, clothing and artwork.

608-267-3976; <http://nmra-scwd.org>

Book Across the Bay Cross-Country Ski Race – Ashland

Feb. 18, 2012

Experience a winter night sky lit up by stars, 1,000 candlelit ice luminaries and the faint glow of a bon fire as you and 4,000 others "Book Across the Bay." Whether you ski or choose to snowshoe across the Chequamegon Bay from Ashland to Waushburn, one thing is for sure, you will want to celebrate when you finish. Live music, fireworks, food and a heated tent await your arrival as you get to Waushburn.

800-284-9484; www.batb.org

Milwaukee RV & Camping Trailer Show – West Allis

Feb. 23-26, 2012

While you're waiting for camping season to begin, check out the RV & Camping Trailer Show for some great travel ideas. More than 100 exhibitors showcase their vehicles at this event. See pop-up campers, travel trailers, fifth wheels, motor homes and park models of all sizes.

414-463-7640; www.milwaukeeervshow.com

Madison Fishing Expo – Madison

Feb. 24-26, 2012

Don't miss the largest fishing expo in the Midwest, with more than 20,000 annual attendees. Check out a diverse lineup of fishing tackle, equipment and boats from the industry's leading manufacturers. The expo also includes seminars and demonstrations from top anglers. And for the junior fishers, there are plenty of fun events including a trout pond.

608-245-1040; <http://www.madfishexpo.com>

Bald Eagle Appreciation Day – Prairie du Chien

Feb. 25, 2012

Breathe in some fresh air and watch for eagles at Bald Eagle Appreciation Day. Multiple spotting scopes are available and depending on Mother Nature's grace, you may even see up to 50 birds in one area. Live bald eagle programs are available in the morning and afternoon with birding experts on hand to answer any questions.

608-326-8555; www.prairieduchien.org

Midwinter Art Faire– Berlin

Feb. 25, 2012

This year's Midwinter Art Faire is sponsored by the Berlin Arts and Humanities Council. With more than 35 vendors of fine arts and crafts, you can find thousands of original pieces of art including paintings, photography, pottery and jewelry. The event also features live entertainment, a silent auction, art displays from local students and a luncheon.

920-273-0644

MARCH

Bayfield Winter Festival – Bayfield

March 2-4, 2012

Winter isn't over until the Bayfield Winter Festival takes place. Get ready to laugh as volunteers wearing goofy costumes partake in the Polar Bear Plunge, a daring jump into the ice cold waters of Lake Superior. Outdoor activities include the Run on Water, ice fishing, ice golfing, dogsled rides, broomball, skiing, tubing, disc golf, snow kiting and a deck party overlooking the lake. If you want to keep warm, stay inside and enjoy the cannonball and bellyflop contests or check out the craft fair.

715-779-5408; www.bayfieldwinterfestival.com

Overture's International Festival – Madison

March 3, 2012

What better place to celebrate global diversity than Wisconsin's own capitol, Madison. Each year, the Overture International Festival at the Overture Center in Madison brings colorful people, languages and performances to its stage in a celebration of life and culture.
608-258-4141; www.overturecenter.com

Klondike Days – Eagle River

March 3-4, 2012

Transform yourself back in time to Wisconsin in the 1800s. What would you be? A fur trader? Lumberjack? At Klondike Days winter festival, event-goers can embrace their inner Wisconsinite with a chainsaw carving competition, lumberjack competition and dog and horse weight pull competitions. There's also a craft show, snowshoe races, food and music. No matter where your interests may lie, the festival promises to be a truly authentic experience with more than 25 events to choose from.
715-891-2679; www.klondikedays.org

Wollersheim Winery Open House – Prairie du Sac

March 3-4, 2012

Celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Wollersheim Winery at the open house. See the inner workings of an authentic winery, with visits through the fermentation room, cooking with wine demonstrations, grapevine pruning demonstrations and winemaking explanations. Guests can leave with a better understanding and appreciation for the ancient and favorite drink.
800-VIP-WINE (847-9463); www.wollersheimwinery.com/events.asp

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Sports Show – West Allis

March 7-11, 2012

Do you like to hunt, fish and camp? If you answered yes, then this is the event for you. Try out the latest outdoor sporting equipment for fishing, boating, hunting and camping at the Wisconsin Expo Center. New to this year is the Big Buck Pavilion, a space where 30 to 35 fishing and hunting seminars will be taking place.
800-472-2070; www.jsonline.com/sportsshow

Canoecopia – Madison

March 9-11, 2012

Canoecopia has evolved a lot since its inception, going from a small event for canoe enthusiasts to the largest consumer paddle sport expo in the world. The event has globally attracted hundreds of exhibitors and hosts 150 speakers educating show-goers on anything from setting up a tent to what to expect for paddle conditions in different waters. With a yearly rotation of speakers and exhibitors you are bound to find new reasons to want to get into the water.
608-267-3976; www.canoecopia.com

St. Patrick's Day Parade – Milwaukee

March 10, 2012

Get out your clover glasses and get down to the St. Patrick's Day Parade this year. With over 120 units marching in this year's parade, you can expect to see live bands, floats, dancers and different mascots all embracing Irish culture. The celebration will begin earlier in the week with entertainment at the Grand Avenue Mall and specials from downtown area bars. Join in on the fun and don't forget to wear a bit o' green.
414-276-6696; www.saintpatricksparade.org

Arti Gras – Green Bay

March 10-11, 2012

With over 100 exhibitors showcasing their best work, this annual visual and performing arts festival is a sight to see. Enjoy eclectic fine arts, crafts, artist demonstrations and jazz performances throughout the weekend long event.
920-494-3401; www.artseventsinc.com

Green Bay Film Festival – Green Bay

March 23-25, 2012

Grab some popcorn and make your way to the Green Bay Film Festival. Watch premiers, see special screenings and talk with filmmakers. With more than 80 films being shown from over 15 countries, you are bound to see a star in the making. This year, students are encouraged to submit a short for the "Future Filmmakers Contest."

920-436-4777; www.gbfilmfestival.org

Maple Syrup Magic Open House – Newberg

March 24, 2012

What would a pancake be like without maple syrup? Find a new appreciation for maple syrup at the Maple Syrup Magic Open House. Go from station to station and watch the process of tapping the tree, collecting the sap and boiling it down over an open flame. After all of that mouth-watering goodness, enjoy a pancake and a pickle dipped in maple syrup. Children can also enjoy arts and crafts projects and outdoor activities. Pre-registration suggested for groups.

800-287-8098; www.riveredge.us

Avalanche Days – Wausau

March 26-April 8, 2012

Get out and give winter one last "hurrah" at Avalanche Days. This two-week long celebration includes ski races, half-pipe snowboarding competitions, discounts on lift tickets and live music.

Enjoy free rental equipment for children age 12 and under, plus free beginner ski lessons.

715-845-2846; www.skigranitepeak.com

Eau Claire Jazz Festival – Eau Claire

March 29-April 1, 2012

If you are looking to hear some fabulous jazz music, look no further. The Eau Claire Jazz Festival is a four-day-long event filled with music and fun. Listen in awe as 70 of the best Midwest school bands compete for a chance to be on the featured stage. Enjoy the art crawl featuring 150 pieces of art and student-displayed art. After the festival, head downtown where multiple bars and restaurants will be playing host to much more great jazz music.

715-836-4092; www.eauclairjazz.com

UNIQUE AND UNUSUAL EVENTS YOU'LL FIND ONLY IN WISCONSIN

Nothing says winter like dropping a giant carp off a 100-foot drop or racing port-o-potties down a hill. Maybe it doesn't sound like your typical winter activity, but the following list of events and festivals, referred to as "Only in Wisconsin," are many Wisconsinites' pride and joy. These zany events make Wisconsin unique and truly authentic, and you won't find them anywhere else.

Droppin' of the Carp – Prairie du Chien

Dec. 31, 2011

What better way to celebrate the New Year by dropping a 29-pound frozen carp from 100 feet in the air? The Droppin' of the Carp is a wacky Wisconsin event you don't want to miss. At the stroke of midnight on Dec. 31 spectators will watch in awe as "Lucky #9" takes a plunge to welcome in 2012. Beforehand, Lucky sits atop a throne and folks can kiss the fish for good luck. Carp-goers can also enjoy a bonfire starting at 9 p.m. along with entertainment. There's even a carp piñata for festival-goers to whack, and the crowning of the Carp King and Carp Queen. There are also plenty of fishy events going on during the weeklong celebration called "Carp Fest." The entire community can enjoy a 3K/5K run/walk, sledding and cross-country skiing events, and more. 608-326-8602; www.prairieduchien.org



Kissing Lucky the Carp, photo courtesy Randall Paske

Jack Frost Fest – Spooner

Jan. 14, 2012

Here, bowling is turned into an outdoor sport – with frozen turkeys. Enjoy turkey bowling, an ice fishing contest, a large pond hockey tournament, antique snowmobile show and plenty more winter activities. 800-367-3306; www.spoonerchamber.org

Barstool Races & Chili Feed – Drummond

Feb. 18, 2012

Watch as participants race head-to-head on decorated barstools on skis at this wacky event. Fun and competitive, the event takes on a less serious note with a new open class race – a race purely for the creative barstool inventors with no design rules or regulations. Trophies are awarded for the most creative barstool and fastest time. Don't miss the chili cook off and other fun activities. 715-739-6645; <http://drummondwi.com>

Perkinstown Outhouse Race – Perkinstown

Feb. 25, 2012

Port-o-potties serve more than one purpose. Watch them in action as teams race their fastest "John" around a track at this annual event. Each team consists of four "pushers" and one "squatter" who move the outhouse around the snowy course. Each outhouse is a unique creation built by participants. There are also children's races throughout the day and lots of unique food options. 715-427-1002; www.cwrclub.com

CANDLELIGHT SKI SCHEDULE

With picturesque snow-covered woodlands and glistening white countryside, Wisconsin is the perfect place for cross-country skiing in the winter. With more than 700 miles of groomed trails, ski options are plentiful and vast. From challenging Olympic-level tracks to flat beginner trails, cross-country skiing is a sport anyone can enjoy.

Take the trails at night for a serene and peaceful experience as many are torchlit or candlelit. In addition, many Wisconsin park trails provide bonfires, warming fires, cooking grills, food and beverages.

608-266-2181; www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/parks/

Jan. 7	Wildcat Mountain State Park, 608-337-4775	Ontario
Jan. 14	Kohler-Andrae State Park, 920-451-4080 Kettle Moraine State Forest, 262-646-3025 Lake Kegonsa State Park, 608-873-9695	Sheboygan Delafield Stoughton
Jan. 29	Hartman Creek State Park, 715-258-2372	Waupaca
Feb. 4	High Cliff State Park, 920-989-1106	Sherwood
Feb. 11	Kohler-Andrae State Park, 920-451-4080 Kettle Moraine State Forest, 262-646-3025 Peshtigo River State Forest, 715-757-3965	Sheboygan Delafield Crivitz
Feb. 18	Governor Thompson State Park, 715-757-3979	Crivitz

AMERICAN BIRKEBEINER

American Birkebeiner – Cable/Hayward

Feb. 25, 2012

Thousands of cross-country skiers from all around the world travel to Wisconsin for the nation's largest and most prestigious cross-country ski marathon: the American Birkebeiner. Stretching approximately 50K from Cable to Hayward, the event challenges the best of the best.

The Birkebeiner also holds shorter races with the Kortelopet, the 23K sister race with a finish line at the Telemark Resort in Cable, short distance sprints for both elite and citizen skiers, the Junior Birkie, a competitive race for 10-18 year olds and a children's 8K noncompetitive ski.

715-634-5025; www.birkie.com

BIRKIE EVENT DETAILS

Salomon/Swiss Miss Barnebirkie – Hayward

Feb. 23, 2012

This is the largest children's cross-country ski event in America, with more than 1,000 participants, ages three to 13. The courses, with distances of one, three, and five kilometers, are designed specifically for children based on age and experience. Each child receives a medal and enjoys cookies and hot chocolate at the finish.

Elite Sprints – Hayward

Feb. 23, 2012

Top American and international skiers compete in short distance sprints along Hayward's Main Street at this free event.

2012 Junior Birkie – Cable

Feb. 24, 2012

The Junior Birkie is held at the Telemark Resort in Cable. Race options include the 3.5K Freestyle Skate, Mass Start Individual Race, and 3 by 1K High School Mass Start Relay. The race is open to youth skiers ages 10-18.

BarkieBirkie 5K Skijoring Race – Hayward

Feb. 24, 2012

Back for its second year, the BarkieBirkie Skijoring Race is a fun race to compete in, or watch.

Skijoring combines cross-country skiing with dog sledding. Each skier is attached to his or her dog with a belt and towline. The dog pulls the skier, who in turn, skis to keep up. Skiers for this race must be 13 years and older.

Birkie Giant Ski – Hayward

Feb. 24, 2012

This fun event will take place on Hayward's Main Street at noon. The event features two groups that compete against each other on giant 25-foot long skis. The event is limited to 30 teams of six individuals.

Snowshoe Nature Hike – Cable

Feb. 24, 2012

Held at the Cable Natural History Museum, this family snowshoe nature hike is free and open to everyone. Participants enjoy a one-mile walk through the winter woods with a museum naturalist.

5/10K Family Fun Ski – Hayward

Feb. 24, 2012

The 5K/10K Family Fun Ski is meant to provide fun and entertainment for the entire family. It's open to everyone and takes place on Hayward's Main Street.

2012 Becker Law American Birkebeiner – Cable/Hayward

Feb. 25, 2012

More than 6,000 participants are expected to enter this 50K ski marathon, from Cable to Hayward. Advance registration is necessary.

2012 Kortelopet – Cable

Feb. 25, 2012

This is the 23K sister race of the American Birkebeiner. The racecourse begins at the Cable Airport and finishes at the Telemark Resort. The Kortelopet is open to skiers ages 13 and older.

2012 State Bank of Drummond Prince Haakon 12K – Hayward

Feb. 25, 2012

The Haakon 12K begins at the Birkie/Korte starting line near the Cable Union Airport and finishes at the Telemark Resort. Shorter in length, this race is perfect for beginners and other skiers who want to be a part of the Birkie experience.

SNOWSHOE EVENTS

Snowshoeing at Riveredge Nature Center – Newberg

Dec. 2011-March 2012

Riveredge Nature Center offers a 350-acre sanctuary that includes 10 miles of hiking trails and six miles of tracked cross-country ski trails through restored prairies and woodlands. Snowshoers follow a special trail in the Mayhew Woods. Weekend environmental programs are offered. 262-375-2715; www.riveredge.us



Perkinstown Snowshoe Race, photo courtesy RJ & Linda Miller

Perkinstown Snowshoe Race – Medford

Jan. 21, 2012

Hundreds of runners and walkers will snowshoe along trails through the Chequamegon National Forest at this event. Three- and six-mile snowshoe races start at the Perkinstown Winter Recreation Area at 11 a.m. Registration starts at 9 a.m.

715-748-3872;

www.perkinstownsnowshoerace.com

Chippewa Moraine Ice Age State Recreation Area and Moonlight Snowshoeing – New Auburn Jan. 7, Feb. 4, 2012

Situated along the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, the 3,600-acre Chippewa Moraine State Recreation Area is one of nine units of the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve and offers two days of snowshoeing. Both days also include a moonlight snowshoeing excursion with Naturalist Rod Gont. All ages are invited. Snowshoes are available, but call ahead to reserve them. 715-967-2800; <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/parks/specific/chipmoraine>

Timm's Hill Trudge – Ogema

March 3, 2012

Join other winter enthusiasts at this annual snowshoe race/walk on Timm's Hill, Wisconsin's highest geographical point. Two courses are available: the 3.5-mile or 7-mile course. Registration fee required.

715-767-5287; <http://highpointvillage.com>